

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL IR

SUBJ: DISASTER REPORT - APRIL 6 EARTHQUAKE NEAR SHAHR KORD

1. SUMMARY: AT 1807-35 ON APRIL 6 AN EARTHQUAKE REGISTERING QUOTE OVER 6 UNQUOTE ON THE RICHTER SCALE STRUCK THE AREA OF SHAHR KORD IN THE SOUTH WESTERN IRANIAN PROVINCE OF CHAR-MAHL BAKHTIARI APPROXIMATELY 600 KILOMETERS FROM TEHRAN. A SECOND EARTHQUAKE, REGISTERING BETWEEN 2-3 ON THE RICHTER SCALE, AFFECTED THE SAME AREA AT 2235-37 THAT NIGHT, FOLLOWED BY A THIRD, REGISTERING ABOUT 3 ON THE RICHTER SCALE, AT 0736-12 THIS MORNING. FOUR TOWNS ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE HAD SEVERE DAMAGE, AND 37 BODIES HAVE BEEN RECOVERED SO FAR. NO AMERICANS ARE KNOWN TO BE IN THE AREA. THE NEAREST CITY, ISFAHAN, WAS UNAFFECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. CHAR-MAHAL BAKHTIARI IS A REMOTE AREA, GENERALLY INACCESSIBLE BY ROAD WITH A RUGGED TERRAIN AND THE HIGH, CRAGGED, ZAGROS MOUNTAINS. IT IS THE CENTER OF THE BAKHTIARI TRIBAL REGION WITH A POPULATION OF 400,000 WHO ARE MAINLY TRIBESMEN. THE AFFECTED REGION IS USED BY THE TRIBE AS SUMMER QUARTERS, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME AREAS OF PERMANENT SETTLEMENTS..

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FOUR SMALL TOWNS ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN SEVERELY DAMAGED IN THE EARTHQUAKE, THE TOWNS OF BRODGEN, GONDAMAN, DOPOLLAR AND CHAGHAKHOR. ACCORDING TO A TELEPHONE REPORT RECEIVED BY AMCONSULATE ISFAHAN FROM SHAHR KORD, CENTRAL TOWN OF THE PROVINCE, RED LION AND SUN OFFICIALS ESTIMATE CASUALTIES WILL REACH 500. DAMAGE IS

REPORTED TO BE EXTENSIVE.

3. THE RED LION AND SUN SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS IN TEHRAN INFORMED THE EMB THAT TWO CONVOYS OF TRUCKS CARRYING TENTS, BLANKETS, HEATERS, STOVES AND FOOD PACKS LEFT TEHRAN TODAY WITH SIMILAR CONVOYS SENT FROM ISFAHAN AND SMALLER TOWNS NEAR THE AFFECTED AREA. RELIEF SUPPLIES ARE ALSO BEING SENT BY HELICOPTER. HELICOPTERS ARE BEING USED TO EVACUATE THE INJURED TO REGIONAL HOSPITALS. THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE RED LION AND SUN SOCIETY FLEW TO ISFAHAN TODAY AND WENT BY HELICOPTER WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS TO INSPECT THE DAMAGE. A RELIEF COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF RED LION AND SUN MEMBERS, MILITARY REPS AND GOVT OFFICIALS, HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN ISFAHAN TO COORDINATE RELIEF OPERATIONS.

4. THESE EARTHQUAKES ARE THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF EARTHQUAKES TO HAVE STRUCK IRAN SINCE MARCH 22. DR AKASHEH OF THE INSTITUTE OF GEOPHYSICS, UNIV OF TEHRAN, COMMENTED THAT YESTERDAY'S EARTHQUAKE WOULD HAVE BEEN DEVASTATING HAD IT OCCURRED IN APOPULOUS AREA. ACCORDING TO DR AKASHEH, THE AREA MOST RECENTLY AFFECTED IS BETWEEN TWO FOLDED AREAS, THE NORTHERN, AN OLDER FORMATION, AND THE SOUTHERN, A YOUNGER ONE. THE BANDAR ABBAS EARTHQUAKES WERE EVIDENTLY CAUSED BY THE SAME MOTION OF THESE PLATES, BUT THERE IS NO UNCLASSIFIED

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CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP SEEN BETWEEN THE TWO SERIES, EXCEPT THAT THE FIRST SERIES IN BANDAR ABBAS MADE OTHER EARTHQUAKES IN THE SAME GEOLOGICAL AREA MORE LIKELY. DR AKASHEH ADDED THAT THE WHOLE ZAGROS-SOUTHWESTERN REGION HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY ACTIVE FOR THE PAST TWO TO THREE MONTHS, AND THAT "THE MIGRATION OF FORCES IS NOT SETTLED YET."

5. OTHER MAJOR CITIES IN SOUTHERN IRAN SUCH AS SHIRAZ, AHWAZ AND ISFAHAN, ALTHOUGH IN SEISMICALLY ACTIVE AREAS, ARE SLIGHTLY OFF THE MAIN FAULT CENTERS. THE ATOMIC ENERGY ORGANIZATION OF IRAN (AEOI) IS PLANNING TO LOCATE IRAN'S NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS NUMBER 3 AND 4 ON THE KARUN RIVER NEAR AHWAZ. AEOI, TOGETHER WITH THE FRENCH WHO ARE DOING THE REACTOR DESIGN, ARE GOING TO CONSIDERABLE LENGTHS TO BUILD-IN EARTHQUAKE SAFEGUARDS ON A SCALE EQUIVALENT TO 0.6 ON THE RATING AS USED IN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY.

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